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ABSTRACT

For the past 10 years, the School of Technical Careers at Southern Illinois University has blended government Job Training Partnership Act or Comprehensive Employment and Training Act funds, existing college programs, and local health facilities into successful training programs in allied health careers. The School of Technical Careers, through job need surveys, curriculum development, and client development, is succeeding in matching the local job market with training activities. During the training programs, students are helped to select careers that fit local needs. They spend one and one-half semesters in on-campus courses, then work in an internship program for the final half semester. This training program has helped many of the program completers to obtain jobs in the local area. The benefits of the program are threefold: (1) students benefit by receiving adequate training to procure and retain local employment; (2) area health facilities benefit by having the opportunity to hire trained entry-level personnel, without the costs and time necessary for lengthy in-house training; and (3) the university benefits through dollars generated by external funds as well as an increase in generated semester hours. A survey to establish the need for training ward clerks (patient unit coordinators) is included. (KC)

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MATCHING MEDICAL/CLERICAL PROGRAMS TO LOCAL JOB MARKETS

A presentation to the

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in

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MATCHING MEDICAL/CLERICAL PROGRAMS TO LOCAL JOB MARKETS

INTRODUCTION

For the past ten years, the School of Technical Careers at Southern Illinois University has blended government JTPA or CETA funds, existing college programs, and local health facilities into successful training programs in Allied Health Careers. The School of Technical Careers through job need surveys, curriculum development, and client development is succeeding in matching the local job market with training activities. The benefits of these programs are felt on three different levels: 1) The students benefit by receiving adequate training to procure and retain local employment. 2) Area health facilities benefit by having the opportunity to hire trained entry-level personnel, without the costs and time for lengthy in-house training. 3) The University benefits through dollars generated by external funds as well as an increase in generated semester hours.

BACKGROUND

Southern Illinois University is actually a system with major instructional units at Carbondale (SIUC) and Edwardsville (SIUE), Illinois. The Carbondale campus offers degrees at various levels, i.e. the associate, bachelor, masters, specialist, and doctorate, including professional degrees in law and medicine. Currently, the Carbondale campus enrolls about 23,000

students. The ten undergraduate colleges/schools enroll about 85 percent of this total enrollment.

The School of Technical Careers enrolls about 3,000 of these students in its 22 associate and 7 baccalaureate programs. These program offerings are quite extensive and reflect the regional and national market place.

As a general rule, about 40 percent of the SIUC student body comes from the greater Chicago area. However, the University has traditionally considered the southern one-third of Illinois as its geographic service region. This consists of 31 sparsely populated, rural counties. There are no major urban centers within this region. Carbondale, with a population of about 40,000, is the area's largest city with the closest major city (St. Louis) about 125 miles away. The current SIU Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) training program services only five of the thirty-one counties.

Economically, the region's major occupations are agriculture and bituminous coal mining with some small industry, local service businesses, educational endeavors, and health care delivery. The health care facility is usually the third to fifth largest employer in any rural (under 15,000) area. In comparison to the statewide average worker pay of $15,693, the area average is $12,620 (Illinois Bureau of Employment Security, 1980) and 30 percent of our population lives at less than poverty level (U.S. Census, 1980). The area's socioeconomic structure is typified by: a) High unemployment (21 percent in Hardin County), b) Large numbers of families on public assistance, c) Low educational attainment (10.1 years in southern Illinois as compared to 12.1 for a state average), d) Many teen pregnancies

(about 25 percent of our high school female students will become pregnant before the age of 17), e) High infant mortality rate (in some rural southern Illinois counties it is three times the national average--about the same as third world countries), and f) A larger than average number of youth and aged.

Our trainees are products of the regions's socioeconomic strata. They are non-traditional university students; typically 23-35, displaced homemakers, heads of households, female, single and have an average of 1.4 dependents. Although there is a wide range in age distribution, the average age in this year's class is 30.

Under the current JTPA legislation, states are divided into Service Delivery Areas (SDA), with a minimum population of 200,000. In our SDA, the Illinois Farmer's Union is the grant recipient and is responsible for regional distribution. Private Industry Councils (PIC's), now the sole decisive body responsible for selection of the JTPA fund recipients, determine whether or not programs are worthy of funding through the SDA.

As with any grant, there is a planning calendar. These calendars are tied to the funding agency and the availability of funds. With IFU (July 1 fiscal year), our proposals are written and submitted by May 1. This means that ideas for new grants have to come from the on-going advisory group during their spring meeting. IFU usually notifies us of approval by the first of June. IFU immediately places the ads for students in the local papers and SIU starts a search for faculty. Usually those individuals who help write the grant in the spring are given first consideration as faculty, if they are qualified and fall within our

affirmative action guidelines. Staff that we bring on-board after July 1 are responsible for the final placement and follow-up activities for the graduating class from the preceding grant.

Prospective clients are screened by Illinois Farmer's Union (IFU) to determine JTPA eligibility, which is based primarily on socioeconomic factors. In order to better serve its clients, IFU also assesses for I.Q. (Beta), reading comprehension, spelling, verbal, clerical, and mathematical ability. The SIU and IFU staffs then interview all clients (prospective trainees) meeting minimum qualifications and select those that should be most successful in our program. Criteria for acceptance include meeting University admission requirements, having adequate transportation, and having dependable child care. Consideration is also given to previous work history, high school rank, and interest in the field. The successful students are enrolled during normal fall enrollment periods. The training program follows the normal SIUC school calendar.

During the fall semester, we start visiting clinical sites for possible student placement during the spring semester. These sites and students are matched before the end of January. The spring activities, besides planning for next year's grant, include: classroom, clinical experiences, job hunting skills development, job hunting, and placement.

SURVEY OF NEEDS

Two types of surveys are conducted: The first survey determines whether a demonstrated need exists for certain job training; whereas, a second follow-up survey inquires specifically what courses, tasks, and

work experiences are necessary once the particular training program has been selected. It might appear unnecessary to conduct an initial survey for need of particular job training, but many CETA/JTPA trainees have been educated for jobs for which there are few or no openings in their particular area. All too often institutions train for what is most convenient for them in terms of instructors and equipment and ignore the lack of job openings.

National and state statistics are useful in determining what fields currently have the greatest job potential for potential clients and offer a starting place. In Illinois, the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs compiles a "Statewide Employment Survey." However, national and state surveys may not reliably reflect employment needs in a particular local area. We contact the director of the local employment office to determine local job needs. Also since our trainees most generally work in a hospital, we contact all area hospital personnel managers and ask where their greatest employment needs lie. We then look at our own training capabilities to ensure successful training for the job market. At this point we have a list of several types of jobs for which we could train and there is a local need. Next we develop a survey for each potential training program.

A survey to establish the need for training ward clerks (patient unit coordinators) is shown in Table 1. This survey was sent to area hospital nursing directors who were asked about training needs, their interest in serving on an advisory committee, input into curriculum, and the level of cooperation in providing internship sites. The results of this first

survey is used to convince the Private Industry Council (PIC) of the need and value of a particular training program.

Once the particular training program is funded, the second more detailed survey is sent to appropriate health administrators. This survey asks which tasks are essential, optional, or unnecessary for the education of potential workers in the field and which of the existing university courses would be most helpful. V-TECS has been very helpful in developing lists of tasks for the SIUC training programs (V-TECS, 1984). Many hospitals also have extensive lists of duties or tasks for most health positions. Table 2 shows a survey developed for a medical records clerk. From such detailed surveys we were able to develop curriculum that closely fit the demands of the current job market for entry level positions.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The advisory committee is consulted on all aspects of the actual training and placement process; however, the project coordinator makes the final decisions. Many advisory committee members also offer internship sites to project students; this provides an excellent evaluation of the training program. An added benefit has been that input from our JTPA training advisory committee has helped infuse existing health and secretarial programs with new ideas and knowledge of the most up-to-date procedures and equipment.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Tasks needed for actual job performance and the recommendations of

the advisory board are used to develop the training curriculum. Although maximum utilization of existing University courses is highly desirable, with a short training program, only the most useful courses can be selected. Task lists are used to develop additional specialized courses that reflect the actual job market. Health care professionals from the area assist in teaching these specialized courses. For example, a local medical records director teaches the course entitled "Medical Records Clerkship," which includes pertinent entry-level duties of a medical records clerk. Alternate courses are availabe for students with differing interests and abilities or for those students who might have already taken some courses in the suggested curriculum. Related programs are paired which differ in levels of abilities and skills, for example, medical transcriptionists and ward clerks. Medical transcription requires ability to type at least 50 words per minute; whereas, ward clerks need minimal typing skills. Therefore, if the student cannot reach the anticipated typing speed, they are placed in an alternate program or course. Our medical/clerical curriculum has always included the following: a) Anatomy and physiology, b) Medical terminology, c) Typing, d) Data entry, e) Job orientation, and f) Seminar. In the seminar course the faculty and students bring up concerns such as personal hygiene, clothing, professional ethics, interpersonal communications, assertiveness, and work site problems.

JTPA training programs require frequent assessment of student progress. Therefore, we have developed a course work progress form that instructors complete on individual students for each course. These forms are very helpful in early identification of a student's academic problems. If a

student is performing poorly, we try to determine the reason and obtain appropriate tutorial help, if necessary.

We also meet individually with each student every two or three weeks and complete a Counseling Report. Our JTPA students sometimes have personal and socioeconomic problems that can interfere with their coursework progress. Many of these students are single parents with grave financial problems. Some are victims of abuse and/or have live-in situations which are detrimental to study. Staff strive for early detection and hopeful solutions to these problems. For many students, self-concept development is as important as the skills portion of the training program.

WORK SITE DEVELOPMENT

Initially, students are totally involved in campus coursework for 1.5 semesters. For the last half of the second semester, students are introduced to the work site for a few hours per week (observation mostly) in conjunction with coursework. We find that work site involvement provides added meaning and, therefore, motivates the student. After completion of the second semester, students are assigned to the work site experience for 25 hours per week and attend a weekly campus job placement seminar for an eight-week period. In earlier programs, students were placed at the work site the first semester with little or no skills. Upon the recommendation of the work site supervisors, we now wait until the second semester when the students have some skills.

We attempt to match each student with a compatible work site. Consideration is given to the student's personality, a location close to the student's

home, skill requirements of the work site, the student's ability, and the temperment of the supervisors. For example, if good typing skills are required at a site, the student must type well. Or if a reception area requires an extroverted personality, we do not place a quiet person there. This matching increases the likelihood of the student being successful in the internship and increases the chance for placement at the work site.

We have found that we need to provide work sites with some type of guidelines of what we expect the student to learn. We have developed an evaluation form which includes not only the expected procedures but the date and level of performance. If these guidelines are not provided, some of the work sites would allow the student to only do those procedures where the student felt comfortable or from which only the work site could benefit.

We visit each work site every two or three weeks to observe what skills the students are learning and to discuss any problems or concerns of both students and supervisors. A work site evaluation form is completed, at least twice during the student's internship. This form allows the students to be rated not only on performance of given procedures, but also on their cooperation, punctuality, attendance and other work attributes. By maintaining a good rapport with supervisors and students through frequent communication, problems are discovered early and solved quickly.

JOB PLACEMENT

The success of JTPA programs is basically measured by the number of participants placed in permanent jobs within three months after the

conclusion of the program at salary bases in excess of minimum wage. The percent of placement thus strongly affects whether we will obtain another grant for the next year. We need to train clients for local jobs, because our lower socioeconomic population tends not to relocate, being typically products of third and fourth generations in a single community.

A widely held myth exists as to how people usually find jobs. We have discovered that few jobs are found for our students by the traditional means. For example, statistically only about 20 percent of jobs are advertised in help-wanted columns or with employment agencies. This percentage of job advertisements is even lower in the health care field. A study discussed in a book by Lathrop (1977) states that:

One percent of people find employment through private employment agencies.
Three percent of people find employment through public employment agencies.
Five percent of people find employment through help-wanted ads.
Six percent of people find employment through school placement services.
Twenty-four percent of people find employment through direct contact with employers.
Forty-eight percent of people find employment through friends or relatives.
Thirteen percent by other or combinations of the above.

Our weekly Job Orientation course prepares our students for the job search and job interview. In this course we cover the following: self-assessment, preparing resume and cover letter, sources of job information, job hunting techniques, interviewing techniques, and professional ethics.

We also send out several hundred letters to hospitals, clinics, doctors, veterinarians, chiropractors, and dentists, informing them of our program and the availability of our students for placement. We use bi-weekly copies of want-ads as springboards for job hunting and class discussion. All students are registered at the SIU Career Planning and Placement Center, take the state and federal civil service tests, put in applications at all area hospitals and clinics, and report weekly to their local job service. We urge our students to actively pursue work and monitor their progress on a job placement activity form.

Although we use these more traditional approaches, we have been most successful by concentrating our efforts on direct contact with employers. By maintaining our relationship with work site supervisors, we can encourage the hiring of our students whenever openings occur in their health facility. The recommendations of work site supervisors have also been extremely beneficial in students being hired at other health care facilities.

After completion of student training, an additional month's salary is provided for the project coordinator to continue job placement activities and to write the final report. For the ten years of federal and state funded training projects, we have an average completion rate of 76 percent and positive placement at the rate of 86 percent. If enrollment in advanced career education classes were included, this figure of positive placement would exceed 90 percent over the ten year period.

SUMMARY

Our ten year experience with matching JTPA/CETA training programs to local job markets has provided benefits to the students, the area health facilities, and the University. Area health facilities need trained entry-level personnel, but cannot afford the costs and time for lengthy in-house training. These individuals are not available within the general population in most rural areas. The health facilities appreciate input into the development of curriculum and the opportunity to provide clinical training (which allows them to evaluate the individual before hiring). The students (clients) benefit because most obtain entry-level jobs in their home communities. The training instituion has benefited through increased enrollment, additional personnel, and obtainment of additional equipment and commodities.

We are proud of the many "success stories" from our former CETA/JTPA students and proud that we have successfully matched training programs to the needs of the local job market.

REFERENCES

Lathrop, R. (1977). Who's Hiring Who? Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

---- Report on the 1980 Census of the Population, #3, Table 19, (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, [1980]).

---- Report of the Illinois Bureau of Employment Security, #202, (Chicago, IL: Research and Analysis Division, 910 S. Michigan, [1980]).

---- V-TECS (Vocational Technical Education Consortium of States), Catalogs, (Malcomb, IL: Curriculum Publications Clearninghouse, Western Illinois University, [1983-84]).

Table 1: Survey for Need of Ward Clerks

SURVEY

(Please return by March 20, 1986)

Purpose of Survey: To determine whether there is a need for the training of Ward Clerks for the Southern Illinois area.

Please answer the following questions:

(1) I feel there is a need to train ward clerks for the Southern Illinois area. (Please check one).

___ Strongly Agree (SA) ___Agree (A) ___Neutral (N)

___Disagree (D) ___Strongly Disagree (SD)

(2) If the above program was funded, would you be willing to offer an on-the-job training site for a student or students?

yes ___ or no___

This program would be a combination of instruction at S.I.U. and on-the-job training in a hospital such as yours. Prior to a student beginning a student internship, should he/she be taught any minimal skills first at S.I.U.?

yes ___ or no___

If you answered yes, what minimal skills would you suggest? (Some examples might be a Medical Terminology course, a filing course, etc. This question does not refer to the ward clerk at the conclusion of his/her total training, but at the beginning of his/her on-the-job training).

Name _____ Job title _____ Date _____

Facility where employed and its address _____

_____

Would you prefer your name to remain anonymous for this survey? _____

Would you be willing to provide input/suggestions for the curriculum of this program?

yes ___ or no ___

Would you be willing to serve on an advisory board?

yes ___ or no ___

Table 2: Survey for Course Content of Medical Records Clerks Training Program

Purpose of Survey: To determine course content and internship experiences for Medical Record Clerk Curriculum.

Part 1: Current course offerings: Which of the following courses offered at S.I.U. do you feel a medical records clerk needs to take. Please check one of the following: yes (course should be taken), optional (opt.) or no (course not necessary.) Brief course descriptions are attached, and further course explanations can be obtained by contacting us. We appreciate your additional comments about courses.

Courses	Should course be taken?	Comments
Typing (keyboarding)	__yes __opt __no	
Filing/Records Management	__yes __opt __no	
Medical Terminology	__yes __opt __no	
Introduction to Anatomy/Physiology	__yes __opt __no	
Communications in Business	__yes __opt __no	
Health Insurance Processing	__yes __opt __no	
Medical Administrative Support Procedures	__yes __opt __no	
Electronic Data Processing Concepts	__yes __opt __no	
Text (word) Processing	__yes __opt __no	
Maching Transcription	__yes __opt __no	
Basic English Review	__yes __opt __no	
Interpersonal Communications	__yes __opt __no	

List any further skills that you feel a clerk should learn.

Part 2: Task Testing: A list of tasks performed by medical record clerks follows. For each of these tasks please check one of the following:

____Yes - A skill that definitely should be learned at the clerk level.

____Opt - Optional skill, nice to have, but not essential.

____No - A skill that does not need to be learned at the clerk level.

Tasks:	Should task be learned?	Comments
Maintain Patient's Medical Record Folder	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare Birth Certificates including interview of mothers	__yes __opt __no	
Assemble/analyze for completeness medical records of Discharged/Deceased patients	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Medical Record Locator File/Sign out System for Records	__yes __opt __no	

TABLE 2-Continued

Tasks:	Should task be learned?	Comments
Complete Insurance Form(s)	__yes __opt __no	
Complete Abstract Form(s)	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare Medical Records for Court	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Patient Master (card) Index File	__yes __opt __no	
Trace Lost Records	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Birth Registry	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Inpatient/Outpatient/Stillborn Death Registry	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Tumor/Cancer Registry	__yes __opt __no	
Code Surgical Operations/Diagnoses/Procedures	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Manual/Automated Disease Indexes	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Manual/Automated Surgical Operations Indexes	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Physical/Confidential Security of Medical Records	__yes __opt __no	
Enter Medical Records Information on Computer	__yes __opt __no	
Develop Format(s) for Report(s)	__yes __opt __no	
Develop Procedures for Reporting	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare Daily/Periodic Inpatient Census Report	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare Admissions and discharge statistical reports from Census sheets.	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare Monthly Statistical Report(s)	__yes __opt __no	
Identify/Retrieve/Supply Patient(s) Medical Records	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Policy/Procedures Manual	__yes __opt __no	
Compose Correspondence	__yes __opt __no	
Type Correspondence	__yes __opt __no	
Maintain Physician Disease/Operation Indexes manually	__yes __opt __no	
File Alphabetically	__yes __opt __no	
File Phonetically	__yes __opt __no	
File Numerically	__yes __opt __no	
Prepare medical reports for microfilming/ microfiche and scan film for quality	__yes __opt __no	
Take/record/transcribe minutes of meetings	__yes __opt __no	
Be familiar with release of medical information; (as valid authorization and the distinguishing between privileged and nonprivileged information)	__yes __opt __no	
Answer telephone/refer calls/reception	__yes __opt __no	

TABLE 2-Continued

Tasks:	Should task be learned?	Comments
Requisition department supplies	__yes __opt __no	
Chart inpatient reports at the Nursing Stations	__yes __opt __no	
Analyze chart deficiencies and record deficiencies on Physician log	__yes __opt __no	

Name _____ Your job title _____

Facility where employed and its address _____

_____

_____

Date _____

Would you prefer your name to remain anonymous for this survey? _____

Is there a text book you would suggest for Medical Record Clerk? _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please return by July 20, 1986.